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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 002798

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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER REVIEW
STRATEGIC DIALOGUE AND AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter W. Bodde, Reason 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte, Assistant Secretary Boucher, and Charge d'Affaires Bodde met with Foreign Minister Kasuri on June 15. Both sides expressed strong support for the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. Kasuri noted that negative comments from the U.S. media and Congress detracted from a positive relationship. Kasuri said that the energy component of the Strategic Dialogue should include discussions on nuclear energy options for Pakistan. He also expressed support for economic development in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), noted confidence-building measures with Afghanistan, and shared President Musharraf's view that a precipitous U.S. withdrawal from Iraq would lead to chaos in the region. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) During a June 15 meeting, Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher, and Charge d'Affaires a.i. Peter Bodde discussed U.S.-Pakistan relations with Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri. Kasuri agreed to the Deputy Secretary's suggestion that the Strategic Dialogue between

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the two nations be resumed. The Deputy Secretary said he could visit Pakistan sometime this fall for the next round of the Dialogue.

13. (C) Kasuri complained that negative comments from the U.S. media and Congress weakened the bilateral relationship. He said the U.S. press did not highlight the significant cooperation between the nations. Kasuri had instructed his staff that they should schedule him with the media during his upcoming visit to Washington D.C. in order to counter the negative stories.

14. (C) Kasuri noted that negative comments were also common in the U.S. Congress. He said that the language in some legislation showed a suspicion of Pakistan's actions and motives that was discouraging and disparaging to Pakistan. Kasuri requested the Administration engage with

Congress on this issue. Kasuri said he would personally meet with Members of Congress during his upcoming visit.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

15. (C) Noting the proposed nuclear deal between India and the U.S., Kasuri wondered why Pakistan did not have a similar arrangement. Kasuri cited power shortages in Karachi as an argument that Pakistan needed further nuclear energy capability. He suggested that an outside group be allowed to establish reactors and maintain control of spent fuel to assuage U.S. proliferation concerns. The Assistant Secretary assured Kasuri that energy would be a part of the strategic dialogue.

FATA AND AFGHANISTAN

16. (C) Responding to a question from the Deputy Secretary, Kasuri highlighted the importance of economic development in the FATA. Political and social development, Kasuri said, cannot succeed until the region develops economically. Kasuri noted Europeans were also looking at economic development plans for FATA and the Northwest Frontier Province. He added that, geographically and culturally, it was more sensible to compare FATA progress with Afghanistan than the rest of Pakistan.

17. (C) Kasuri stressed that Pakistanis who want economic and social progress agree that the Taliban should not control Afghanistan. On refugees, Kasuri asked for help from the international community in repatriating returnees from Pakistan. The refugee presence in Pakistan caused instability, said Kasuri, whereas they could help the Afghan economy if they returned. As in his earlier conversation

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with the Assistant Secretary (reftel), Kasuri said that Pakistan supported the cross-border jirga with Afghanistan because the meeting could lead to increased cooperation, but said that no third party should be included.

IRAQ

18. (C) Kasuri asked the Deputy Secretary his opinion on the state of Iraq. According to Kasuri, President Musharraf agreed that a precipitous U.S. withdrawal would lead to chaos in the region. He stressed, though, that the status quo should not become comfortable for Iraqi leaders; they should be forced to meet benchmarks.

The Deputy Secretary has reviewed this message.
BODDE